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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 24 November 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALSTON

CONTENTS

Consideration of reports (continued)

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (continued)

Belarus (continued)

Organization of work (continued)

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GE.92-18564 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 7)(continued)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Belarus (E/1990/7/Add.5)(continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the representative of Belarus to continue his replies to the questions put by members at the second meeting.

2. Mr. GORNAK (Belarus), replying to the questions by Mr. Muterahejuru, said that, at times, as many as 5,000 to 6,000 foreigners, especially from Africa, studied in Belarus. Formerly their education had been free of charge and no payment had been required for housing. Currently, there were no problems or incidents, except for certain financial difficulties which had arisen as a result of Belarus's entry into the market economy. Higher education institutions had decided to charge fees for foreign citizens, but those fees were considerably lower than in other countries. There had even been an increase in the number of foreign students from countries such as China and Turkey. There was no oppression of foreign citizens. Great difficulties arose, however, when students had to return home at the end of their studies, since fares had risen substantially. In a few cases, students did not wish to go home, and applications for residence were decided on a case-by-case basis.

3. Replying to Mr. Mratchkov's questions, he explained that under the Education Act it was possible to set up private schools. Such schools existed, but they were accessible only to well-off persons, since the average monthly wage was 5,777 roubles whereas the average monthly fee for a private school was 6,000 roubles. The Government considered that private schools helped to raise the level of education, although the tuition given in them had to comply with all government requirements. Classes in private schools were two or three times smaller than in State schools. There were no private universities or technical institutes. A number of new higher education institutions had been created, especially for providing specialized training and recycling in the field of management and marketing in response to Belarus's change-over to a market economy. The number of students in higher education had not fallen despite financial difficulties, and no reduction was being planned, since education was deemed to be vital for the country's future. Previously, higher education institutions had followed curricula laid down in Moscow, but they were now granted substantial autonomy. Rectors and professors were appointed by the academic staff in a secret ballot. The atmosphere in the universities was normal, although protests sometimes occurred over the low salaries. Relations among students were good. In the past graduates had been obliged to work anywhere in the Soviet Union where their services might have been needed, but that was no longer the case, the primary consideration being the internal needs of Belarus.

4. Replying to the questions raised by Mrs. Jiménez Butragueño, he said that no religious education was taught in State schools. Consideration had, however, been given to the possibility of teaching the history of religion in schools. In any case, the teaching of religion was no longer being hindered,

and religious education could be obtained at the Academy of Theology and at two seminaries. Owing to financial constraints, the situation with regard to the education of the elderly was rather complicated. In some countries it was asked why the elderly should receive education at all, but in Belarus they had access to it at evening classes and through the highly developed system of correspondence courses. In any case the literacy rate in Belarus was very high. Unfortunately, market forces were likely to have a negative impact on accessibility.

5. In reply to Mrs. Ider's questions, he explained that, pursuant to article 11 of the Constitution, foreigners enjoyed the same rights and obligations as citizens. Violations were punished by the courts. The Constitution also stated that if the laws of Belarus ran counter to a ratified treaty, the latter prevailed.

6. Mrs. Ider had inquired about the appropriations for education. In the former Soviet Union, education had been given great attention. After the Second World War, appropriations for education had amounted to between 9 and 11 per cent of budgetary resources. That policy had borne fruit: in 1957 the first sputnik had been launched and in 1961 the first man had been placed in orbit. After 1957 the experts of many advanced countries had studied the education system in the former Soviet Union and had found that the teaching of natural sciences was at a high level. However, beginning in 1963, educational reform had so mangled syllabuses that it had prompted revulsion in the young against mathematics. After 1963 education in the Soviet Union had fallen apart; budgetary appropriations had declined from 11 per cent to 5.5 per cent when Mr. Gorbachev had appeared on the scene and, with all due respect, Mr. Gorbachev had not once mentioned education while he was in power. Mr. Gorbachev, who was known for his phenomenally good health, had not attended an all-Union congress of teaching staff because of a sore throat; in 1987 at a plenum of the Communist Party Congress at which education was discussed, he had spoken about perestroika, not education. At present, by decision of the Belarusian Supreme Council, 10 per cent of the national budget of Belarus was devoted to education.

7. Replying to Mrs. Ider's question about the teaching of ideological subjects, he said that article 4 (2) of the draft of the new Constitution of Belarus stated that it could not be compulsory for any citizen of the Republic to study the ideology of any political party or religious or other social organization. Education was being depoliticized. Purely ideologically oriented subjects, such as the history of the Communist Party, had been dropped from curricula.

8. Mrs. Ider had also remarked that in a number of countries education was becoming unpopular and had asked if that was also true in Belarus. In fact, learning was a stressful occupation bringing no immediate rewards, and was imposed on people at an age when they did not fully understand what it offered them. Today it was found that income increased in proportion to education. Nevertheless, education was not popular and resistance to it was inherent in individuals.

9. In reply to Mr. Fofana concerning the equality of teachers in public and private education, he said that equality was impossible because the number of

teachers in private schools in relation to numbers of students was much higher and they were consequently paid more. If private schools did not pay more than State schools they would not exist.

10. He thanked Mr. Konate for having pointed out a statistical paradox in his statement by asking how personal income could increase when production was declining and prices were increasing. He had relied on official State figures showing that monetary income had increased over one year by 6.1 per cent, but in fact that figure was incorrect. It was only the mass of money in circulation that had expanded: real income could not have increased when it had been possible to buy twice as much for 300 roubles as could now be bought for 3,000 roubles. According to the press, monetary income had increased 6.5 times over the last three quarters of a year, but the figures for increases in wages told nothing about increases in real income. On his return to Belarus he would tell the statistics office not to publish such figures.

11. He had already answered Mr. Konate's question about the depoliticizing of education. In reply to the question on whether the old educational system had been retained or a new one introduced, he said that in general the old system had been maintained, but that education as it had existed in the 1950s and 1960s was being reviewed, and the changes introduced in the 1960s were now being dropped. The old system had not been changed because it was not all bad; rather the system was being restored to what had been taken as an example by other countries, bearing in mind achievements that had been made in the meantime.

12. He had already explained why the study of Russian was compulsory. Russian and Byelorussian were very close as languages and Byelorussia (White Russia) had always been part of Russia. If the Russian language were dropped the country would suffer a great loss: 90 per cent of the population spoke or understood Russian, and most people spoke Russian better than Byelorussian. Byelorussian had been introduced as the official language to prevent it from dying out as a result of the dissemination of Russian; it was now enjoying a revival and bilingualism was being imposed. Neither alternative to bilingualism was acceptable; suppressing a language was a violation of human rights. As a civil servant, he had to read and write Byelorussian, but once on the street he wanted to be free to speak any language he wished. For teaching purposes not only Russian but another language was necessary: if he had his way, school leavers would not receive a diploma without a knowledge of Russian and one other widely spoken foreign language. At present about 80 per cent of children in secondary schools were taught English, and in many schools German was also taught, particularly since unification.

13. Chernobyl had been a great disaster and an enormous obstacle to normal development, involving serious financial implications. Although the disaster had not taken place on its territory, Belarus had suffered 50 per cent of the total damage and the after-effects had not yet been fully studied. Radiation sickness and related ailments were increasing.

14. In conclusion, his delegation thanked the Committee for givings its attention to the difficult problems faced by Belarus in its transitional period.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that in the absence of specific follow-up questions, the present phase of the consideration of the second periodic report of Belarus (E/1990/7/Add.5) was now completed. In accordance with its usual practice, the Committee would make its concluding observations on another day, and representatives of Belarus could be present if they so wished.

16. Mr. Gornak (Belarus) withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (agenda item 2) (continued)

17. The CHAIRMAN, confirming the arrangement whereby the sessional working group would meet the following week on 30 November, 1 and 2 December, said that the arrangement was due to the last-minute withdrawal of four States. That withdrawal had caused considerable difficulty, and disincentives might have to be considered for such withdrawals in the future. With regard to the additional session of the Committee scheduled for May 1993, he suggested that a report might not have to be adopted for that session until the ninth session in November-December 1993. Such a procedure would be consistent with the practice of most committees and would enable the Committee not only to deal with all the reports on its agenda but to consider the situation of some States that had never reported. A decision would have to be taken within the next two days in order to give the sessional working group the task of drawing up a preliminary list of questions relating also to those States that had never reported. That would enable the Committee to indicate to those States its intention of considering their situations and give them reasonable time to respond.

18. Mr. SIMMA said that if the sessional working group meeting the following week was to do the work of the pre-sessional working group, he did not see how the Committee could do its homework. He had been put in charge of the reports by Australia and Canada for the May 1993 session and had seen them only the previous Friday. He would not have time to do any research before the beginning of the following week. He therefore suggested that the pre-sessional working group might be held at the same time as the seminar scheduled for late January 1993 on indicators on economic and social rights. The working group might meet during the seminar, which lasted a whole week.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the time allotted for the seminar on indicators could not be reduced, but perhaps the five members present for the seminar could have full working facilities to act as a pre-sessional working group for one day. If the members were prepared with a refined list of draft questions, the work of the pre-sessional working group might be completed in one day.

20. Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAN was concerned that the secretariat servicing the seminar would find it difficult to cope with servicing a pre-sessional meeting in addition to the seminar.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the seminar would not be serviced by the Committee Secretariat but by another team so that the Committee Secretariat could be available if requested to service the pre-sessional group on the day it met.

22. Mr. RATTRAY asked whether it would be possible to use the time made available by the arrangements proposed to deal with the additional information submitted by Jamaica on the afternoon of Wednesday, 2 December.

23. The CHAIRMAN said that would not be possible if the discussions on Tuesday and Wednesday, 1 and 2 December, were held as proposed in a working group since any consideration of additional information had to take place in plenary session.

24. Mr. SIMMA said that the matters to be discussed on those days - general comments, the optional protocol and the Conference on Human Rights - were of such importance that it would be desirable for all members of the Committee to be present during the deliberations.

25. The CHAIRMAN therefore suggested that the discussions on Tuesday and Wednesday, 1 and 2 December, should be in plenary session; that would also allow the discussion of the additional information from Jamaica, should time permit.

26. It was so decided.

27. The CHAIRMAN asked whether the Committee could agree that he should explore the possibility of setting aside one day during the seminar for five Committee members to act as a pre-sessional working group to finalize the list of questions.

28. It was so agreed.

29. The CHAIRMAN said he had already commented at an earlier meeting on the fact that the country files prepared for Committee members by the Secretariat contained no information from non-governmental sources. The Committee had clearly indicated on a number of occasions its inability to carry out its work effectively in the absence of such information, which was, furthermore, unobtainable from the Library of the Palais des Nations, or from the Centre for Human Rights, which had no library or documentation facilities. It was deplorable that at a time when Governments were agreed that information from non-governmental sources was acceptable in forums such as the present Committee that the Centre for Human Rights was unable to provide it. He intended to propose a strong statement on the subject for insertion in the Committee's report.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Wednesday, 25 November 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALSTON

later: Mrs. BONOAN-DANDAN

CONTENTS

Organization of work (continued)

Consideration of reports (continued)

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (continued)

Norway

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GE.92-18589 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (agenda item 2) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the present composition of the working group should be maintained for the current session. Its members would accordingly be Mrs. Bonoan-Dandan, Mr. Kouznetzov, Mr. Muterahejuru, Mr. Simma and Mr. Wimer Zambrano. The working group could meet to consider lists of questions the following Monday, 30 November, and any other member of the Committee who wished to participate would be welcome to do so.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN asked whether members agreed to the suggestion made at the 3rd meeting not to produce a report for the May 1993 session but to draft a single report at the November/December 1993 session covering both sessions.

4. It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would thus be able to schedule reports on the situation in non-reporting States parties. He thought that the most appropriate procedure would be to take two or three States which had been parties to the Covenant for more than 10 years but had never submitted a report. He suggested selecting the three States that were longest overdue. They could be informed immediately that their situation was to be considered at the May 1993 session and requested to submit reports or to attend.

6. Mr. SIMMA pointed out that, in order to have a meaningful discussion, rapporteurs should be appointed for the States concerned.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to follow the procedure he had indicated.

8. It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 5) (continued)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Norway (E/1990/7/Add.7)

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Lund, Ms. Sirevåg and Mr. Strømmen took places at the Committee table.

10. Ms. LUND (Norway), expressing her delegation's appreciation of the Committee's work, observed that for Norway human rights implied civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. That concept was a fundamental part of Norway's human rights policy. In 1989, the Norwegian Government had appointed a committee of lawyers with the mandate to propose how important international human rights treaties to which Norway was a party, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural

Rights, might be incorporated into Norwegian legislation. An amendment to the Constitution had now been proposed for consideration after the new Storting had been elected in 1993.

11. Ms. SIREVÅG (Norway), answering questions put by the Committee on articles 13 and 14 of the Covenant, stated that total public expenditure on education in Norway had amounted to 7.2 per cent of the gross national product in 1990 as compared with 7 per cent in 1988 and 6.5 per cent in 1985. The Ministry's proposed budget for education and research in 1993 represented an increase of approximately 6 per cent over that of 1992.

12. With regard to pre-school education, she reported that the gap between the actual demand for places and the capacity in existing child-care institutions had been considerably reduced since Norway's initial report (E/1982/3/Add.12) had been presented. Facilities were now provided for 46 per cent of all children between 1 and 7 years of age. Coverage was low for the youngest children, but increased with age, and at present close to 80 per cent of 6-year-olds were accommodated in child-care institutions.

13. Replying to the question on the development of vocational training and apprenticeship systems, she explained that in Norway general education and vocational education and training for 16- to 19-year-olds were coordinated in one comprehensive system of upper secondary education, under which vocational education at school was linked with apprenticeship training. During the 1980s, the upper secondary education system had been considerably expanded, with 75 per cent of the new places in vocational education. There was a strong focus on the development of apprenticeship training, and measures had been initiated to encourage companies to take on apprentices; those measures had resulted in a considerable increase in the numbers of apprentices in vocational training and in a growing percentage of young people in the 16 to 19-year age group attending upper secondary school. Unemployment had meant that more young people were turning to education in the 1990s, but the number of apprenticeship places had declined. In 1992, the central Government had taken new initiatives to encourage employers to recruit apprentices. The State had also continued to give additional grants to the counties, which were responsible for upper secondary education, for extra classes every year. In addition, the authorities organized vocational courses directed specifically at the labour market. In January 1991, around 11,500 young people between 16 and 19 years of age had registered for such courses, as against 3,900 in 1981.

14. The figures for 1989 showed that 93.7 per cent of 16-year-olds went on to take upper secondary education. The present proportion of pupils transferring from lower to upper secondary education was estimated to be about the same. However, not all pupils in upper secondary education followed the full three years of consecutive education or training. Many moved horizontally by taking two or three basic foundation courses. The reform in upper secondary education to be introduced in 1994 was expected to improve that situation.

15. Turning to new developments, she said that the main aspects of the reforms introduced in 1992 were: the introduction of a legal right to three years' upper secondary education for everyone between the ages of 16 and 19, with a corresponding obligation on the part of local or regional authorities

to provide an adequate number of places; the introduction of a legal obligation for the local authorities to establish follow-up services for young people who were not in employment, or who had not applied for or accepted a vocational training place, or who chose to terminate their training in the middle of a course, so that as far as possible all young people had the opportunity to acquire an education leading to a recognized qualification; and the introduction of a new model combining two years at school with subsequent training in the workplace for trades recognized under the Vocational Training Act. The time spent on the development of the trainee's skills and the time spent on work for the benefit of the enterprise were clearly distinguished. The total time from the start of the foundation course to the acquisition of a recognized qualification was up to four years. The curricula covered the whole period in school and at the workplace. If there were insufficient apprenticeship places in industry, the local authorities would be responsible for providing equivalent vocational training at school.

16. Another important aspect was the provision of a broad knowledge base as a point of departure for further specialization and lifelong learning. Foundation courses would be coordinated and their number reduced from 109 at present to 13. Some vocational specialization would take place in the second and especially the third year or in the workplace.

17. In addition, a general matriculation standard providing entry to all higher education would be introduced, with two minimum requirements: successful completion of three years' consecutive upper secondary education or possession of a recognized vocational qualification/trade certificate; and a specific level of achievement in Norwegian, English, social studies, mathematics and science/environmental studies.

18. The reform was scheduled for implementation in the autumn of 1994. The main consequence was that places had to be available to all 16-year-olds wishing to enter upper secondary education. The local authorities also had a duty to provide places for pupils and apprentices in addition to those with the proposed legal right, in order to give opportunities to applicants with special needs for whom three years' education or training was insufficient. Thus, those with special needs were entitled to take more than three years of education or training if necessary, and also to be given priority in their choice of educational course.

19. The educational and methodological implications of the reform were considerable, and much effort would be needed to devise suitable teaching methods, for both general studies and vocational training. The new teachers' guidelines were intended to facilitate separation of the teaching into modules. A document focusing specifically on the projected reform was available to Committee members.

20. Turning to the question on the school drop-out rate and unemployment level among young people, she said that it was a principle of Norwegian education that all pupils were offered education adapted to their abilities up to the age of 16, when compulsory schooling ended. Special provisions could be made for pupils with special needs. All pupils took the final examinations, and there was no repeating of grades and consequently no dropping out of compulsory schooling. However, despite the high numbers that

transferred to upper secondary education, progress from one stage to the next was poor at that level, with many pupils moving horizontally. The Norwegian authorities had recognized that the present system was unsatisfactory and the reform of upper secondary education was expected to correct the situation. The 16-19 age group was given high priority on the labour market so that unemployment in that group was relatively low. In September 1992, around 4,900 young people aged between 16 and 19 years old had been registered as unemployed by the Directorate of Labour. Most of the unemployment in that group had been among 19-year-olds.

21. It was difficult to define the respective percentages of boys and girls attending vocational training establishments. If "vocational" was defined as all education and training other than general studies at upper secondary level, the proportion of girls and boys in vocational education in 1991 was 44.3 per cent and 55.7 per cent respectively. In comparison the respective proportions of girls and boys in general studies was 55.2 per cent and 44.8 per cent. There were considerable variations within the different subject areas. The main conclusion to be drawn from the figures for 1991 was that the proportion of boys and girls within the different subject areas had not changed much during the past 15 years. The most clearly marked differences had been noted in home economics and aesthetic subjects, where the proportion of boys had increased considerably. In 1976, boys had represented only 4.9 per cent and 7.2 per cent respectively of the students in those two areas, as against 22.3 per cent and 15.7 per cent respectively in 1991.

22. In principle there were equal opportunities for boys and girls in vocational education and training. The proportion of women in vocational training was fairly high; however, girls still mainly tended to choose traditional women's occupations, and boys men's occupations. A special secretariat in the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs dealt with equality issues in education and tried to break down traditional barriers and patterns of choice with regard to studies and careers. The Standing Committee on Church and Education in the Storting had recommended that the school counselling services should be strengthened to encourage girls to take up traditional men's occupations.

23. The teaching of human rights was a basic element of Norwegian education, laid down in the Education Act and in the curriculum guidelines for primary and secondary schools. Tolerance and equality were taught from the first years of primary school. The curriculum included teaching about the central international human rights instruments. Furthermore, the different aspects of human rights were explicitly included in the teaching of other subjects such as civics, religious instruction and home economics.

24. With regard to the education of adult refugees and immigrants, Norwegian policy was based on the principle that refugees and immigrants who had not completed their basic education received the same treatment as Norwegians in that situation. However, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs was particularly concerned to allow refugees and immigrants access to basic education on favourable conditions. The Ministry had completed a curriculum in 1992 for formal basic education adapted to adult immigrants and refugees which had been distributed to the municipalities for implementation beginning in the current year. The municipalities were responsible for its

implementation, as they were responsible for all compulsory schooling. The objective was to give immigrants the possibility of obtaining a certificate equivalent to the Norwegian lower secondary level certificate.

25. The teaching of adult immigrants and refugees was a high-priority area in Norwegian educational policy and considerable resources were allocated to it every year, especially to courses in Norwegian. Adult immigrants were offered an introductory course of 240 teaching hours free of charge, and refugees were offered 500 hours, with an extension of 250 hours if necessary, also free of charge. In general those courses were financed by extra grants awarded to municipalities, and were often organized in cooperation with adult education organizations. Activities targeted at immigrant groups had also been initiated as part of the national follow-up of the International Literacy Year in 1990.

26. The National Curriculum Guidelines for Compulsory Education of 1987 stated that the children of migrants or refugees "shall have the same opportunities, rights and obligations as their fellow pupils whose mother tongue is Norwegian". The basic principle of the Norwegian educational system, that all children had the right to schooling in accordance with their abilities, naturally also applied to them. The Guidelines explicitly stated that all children of migrants and refugees should be prepared for life in Norwegian society and should receive instruction in Norwegian. At the same time those children had to be given the opportunity to maintain and develop their own cultural identity through being taught their mother tongue. The Guidelines contained chapters on mother-tongue teaching for immigrants and on Norwegian as a second language. The Ministry gave direct grants to local authorities to ensure adequate facilities for mother-tongue teaching. It was emphasized that the multicultural factor added a new dimension to Norwegian society and enriched the social and cultural life of the schools. Norway participated actively in the innovative work and projects of the OECD and the Council of Europe on the integration of migrant children in schools. A "Threshold Level of Norwegian" had been developed as part of the Council of Europe's project on modern languages. That work had been useful in the drawing up of curricula for the teaching of Norwegian as a second language at school and in adult education.

27. In the case of minority groups, 75 to 80 per cent of children in compulsory education in 1991-1992 received teaching in their native language. At present some 80 different mother tongues were taught in Norwegian schools. Such teaching was not always requested and qualified teachers for some languages were difficult to find, but high priority was being given to special teacher training courses.

28. With regard to the steps taken to ensure equal access to higher education for groups which hitherto had had limited access, government policy in recent years had been to increase the numbers of men and women of all ages at all levels of higher education. An important factor in that development was the large number of colleges of higher education distributed throughout the country and the extra resources that were being channelled into such education. Student numbers had increased by 50 per cent, i.e. from 100,000 to 150,000 between 1988 and 1992, 45,000 more students than originally predicted. The proportion of students transferring from secondary school to higher

education had risen from 16 per cent in 1981 to 34 per cent in 1990. The high priority given to education at all levels had resulted in a general rise in the educational level of the population; the numbers continuing education after the age of 16 had risen from 30 per cent in 1970 to over 50 per cent in 1990. Over the same period the proportion receiving higher education had risen from 6.7 per cent to 14.1 per cent and that receiving upper secondary education from 23.9 per cent to 39.8 per cent, whereas the proportion receiving compulsory education had fallen from 69.4 per cent to 46.1 per cent.

29. The Committee had asked what percentage of the handicapped population was attending special schools. It was important to keep in mind that Norway endeavoured as a basic principle to integrate all pupils as far as possible into ordinary schools and into the local community. The number of pupils in special schools was thus relatively low. The number of special State schools had been reduced, and in their place 20 national resource centres for special education were being introduced from 1 August 1992, each covering education for a specific disability. Research and development programmes were also part of the reorganization. The figures for 1988-1989 showed that 6 per cent of all pupils in compulsory education had special educational needs. Ninety per cent of them attended ordinary schools or special classes at ordinary schools, and that integration process continued in upper secondary school. Regulations giving priority to pupils with special educational needs had come into force in 1987. Detailed figures were available for the distribution of pupils between different types of schools or institutions. During the 1992/93 school year, 900 pupils in the 7-19 age group were attending the national resource centres on a full-time basis, corresponding to 0.6 per cent of the total school population at primary and secondary level.

30. General matters concerned with the terms and conditions of the employment of civil servants, including teachers, were negotiated between the unions and the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration. Teachers had the right to strike but only on the basis of such negotiations. More detailed aspects of working conditions within the school system were conducted between individual teachers' unions and the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. Current issues under discussion were the number of teacher working hours per school year and the requirement for teachers to spend non-teaching time at school. The salaries and conditions of work of teachers in comparison with staff in comparable posts in the public and private sector varied depending on the teacher's qualification and the sector concerned. The salaries of teachers with a general teacher's certificate obtained after three years' training were usually slightly higher than the salaries of other staff in the public sector with a similar length of training (i.e. librarians, pre-school teachers, health and social welfare and administrative staff), but in the private sector some administrative posts (i.e. in banks) with lower educational requirements were better paid. However, 65 per cent of teachers had taken a further year of training for the qualification of adjunkt, which carried a higher salary. From 1993, basic teacher training would be extended to four years and achievement of adjunkt status would be automatic.

31. Teachers with post-graduate qualifications, particularly those with a certain degree of seniority, were better paid than their colleagues in the public sector (central or local government administration) but the same was not always true in the private sector. Salaries were considerably higher, for

example, in the oil industry which in the 1980s had attracted many qualified science teachers. Salaries were also higher in engineering, medicine, architecture and the law. Although on average the salaries of the teaching profession had lagged behind other sectors in the early 1980s, between 1987 and 1990 they had increased at a rate 1.8 per cent higher than those of other groups. Recent fluctuations in the labour market had highlighted the stability of the teaching profession as opposed to work in the private sector. In the relatively few private schools in Norway conditions for teachers were generally the same as in the State schools.

32. A number of questions had been asked on article 15, which covered the right to take part in cultural life. There were no serious regional disparities in Norway with regard to access to culture and cultural facilities, since the decentralization of cultural facilities that had been government policy for the past 20 years was largely complete. In that connection, it should be mentioned that every one of Norway's 448 municipalities had its own public library. With a view to increasing general accessibility to cultural activities, the Ministry of Culture gave considerable support to different art activities organized at regional and local level throughout the country as well as support to some institutions at the national level such as orchestras, musical groups and a theatre company which performed throughout the country. At local level, many voluntary organizations and religious institutions initiated a wide range of cultural activities, thus playing an essential role in cultural life. There were few significant differences between the various regions in the use made of most cultural institutions. Although distance had some effect in the use made of any given facility, interest in a particular cultural activity was the most decisive motivating factor and lack of interest was the principal reason cited for not attending cultural exhibitions and productions and sporting events. On the other hand, there were no regional disparities as regards the number of types of mass media patronized, although the popularity of each did vary from region to region.

33. Turning to the specific measures implemented on behalf of the Sami people, she said that under article 110 (a) of the Norwegian Constitution they were assured of conditions enabling them to preserve and develop their language, culture and way of life. Similar provisions were contained in section 1-1 of the Sami Act of 1987, which also established the Sami Assembly, a mainly advisory body with some executive powers. In addition, the Sami Educational Council gave advice to the Ministry of Education and other agencies on Sami educational affairs and a Sami College of Education had been established in 1989. Regular broadcasting in the Sami language had taken place since 1947. The right to learn Sami had become part of Norwegian law in 1967 and had recently been strengthened by further measures. Children in Sami districts were entitled to be educated in or be taught the Sami language and outside Sami districts, children with a Sami background might receive education in Sami. In December 1990, Sami speakers had been given the right to use their language in dealings with local and regional authorities. Special arrangements had been made to facilitate that practice, particularly in six municipalities in the counties of Finnmark and Troms forming the administrative area for the Sami language where special rules applied because of the large number of Sami speakers. Legislation and official announcements and forms in that area had to appear in both Sami and Norwegian and the

authorities responsible for the area were also required to reply to written communications from members of the public in Sami. Affirmative action for the benefit of the Sami people was part of official policy, and such measures had been implemented in many fields in addition to legal provisions, financial and organizational measures to carry through that policy. Approximately NKr 200 million was allocated each year in direct State support for various activities, institutions, etc.

34. With regard to the weight given to culture in development plans, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs had in 1992 made a detailed survey of cultural policy and the aims of government policy, which, since the 1970s, had been to decentralize the administration of public cultural funds to municipal and county levels. All counties and most municipalities now had a cultural administration. In the 1990s, considerable emphasis was being placed on the cultural dimension of development, the importance of cultural factors as key variables in overall development and the inclusion of culture in all development policies and projects. The acknowledgement of the cultural dimension of development was a major objective of the United Nations World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997), and Norway had participated actively in its implementation. On the initiative of Norway and the other Nordic countries, a World Commission on Culture and Development was to be established by the end of 1992, under the joint auspices of UNESCO and the United Nations. It was difficult to specify the percentage of government resources that were being devoted to cultural ends because such funds were administered by several different ministries.

35. The Committee had asked whether Norway was considering the possibility of eliminating the time-limit placed on the protection accorded the work of authors and artists. In reply to that question, she pointed out that the moral interests of authors and other artists were protected in sections 3 and 48 of the Norwegian Copyright Act of 12 May 1961, and were not subject to a time-limit. Sections 40 and 42 of the Act protected the material rights of authors, other artists and performing artists for 50 years after their deaths, a period that was not considered restrictive by the Bern Convention and the Universal Copyright Convention, to both of which Norway was a party. There were no plans at present to amend the Norway Copyright Act.

36. Replying to the question about Norway's scientific and cultural cooperative relations with countries other than the European Community, she said that Norway had a large-scale involvement in international, scientific and cultural cooperation, either as part of bilateral and multilateral agreements or through participation in international organizations and conferences. She should, however, add that Norway was not a member of the European Community.

37. Norway participated in the activities of international organizations such as the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Council of Europe, the OECD, UNESCO and the ECE, and maintained worldwide contacts with other countries as part of that cooperation. It was represented on various policy committees, subgroups, projects, etc. organized under the auspices of those organizations. Although it was an EFTA country, Norway participated in some European Community

programmes on education and was also actively involved in the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development; that cooperation would be extended considerably under the EEA Agreement.

38. Norway participated in a number of European research programmes and institutions and was also engaged in research cooperation on a broader international scale. It participated in the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and was also particularly involved in research related to the developing countries, mainly through UNFPA, UNRISD, WHO or specific agreements. It took an active part in the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, a joint initiative of the United Nations and the World Bank. It was a member of the Nordic Africa Institute, which was particularly concerned with research on North-South issues.

39. Norway had bilateral cooperation with countries in various parts of the world, including agreements on exchanges of specialists in education, research workers and expertise.

40. The number of bilateral school exchanges had increased considerably since 1990 and many Norwegian schools participated in UNESCO's Associated Schools Project. The number of exchange programmes and agreements linking Norwegian universities and other institutions of higher education with higher education institutions in different parts of the world was increasing rapidly. A Centre for International University Cooperation had therefore been established to coordinate those activities and to administer a special programme of institutional cooperation with developing countries in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Centre also served as the Norwegian coordinating unit for exchanges under the ERASMUS Programme.

41. The new contacts with countries in central and eastern Europe were being given a high priority in current Norwegian educational policies and a programme of action to assist those countries had been launched by the Norwegian Government in 1992.

42. Mrs. Bonoan-Dandan took the Chair.

43. The CHAIRMAN expressed appreciation to the representatives of Norway for their statements and invited the members of the Committee and representatives of the specialized agencies to make comments or put questions.

44. Mr. SIMMA commended the manner in which Norway had discharged its reporting obligations under the Covenant; it should serve as a model for future efforts. It would have been even better, however, had the answers to the Committee's questions been made available in advance to Committee members.

45. With regard to the legal obligation on the part of the local authorities to establish follow-up services for young people, what measures were available to persuade young persons choosing to terminate their training in the middle of a course of the unwisdom of that action? In many countries apprentices were regarded by employers as a form of cheap labour. Was that the case in Norway and, if so, what means of appeal and redress were available to young people to counter such practices? One of the minimum requirements for

matriculation in Norway was a specific level of achievement in science/environmental studies. How was that praiseworthy emphasis on the environment to be reconciled with the Norwegian Government's current attitude towards whaling? With regard to the proportion of girls and boys in given areas of study, was he to understand that as many as two thirds of girls in vocational training chose to opt out of physical education?

46. How was sex education handled in Norway, in particular in the context of avoiding unwanted pregnancy and combating the increasing prevalence of sexually-transmitted diseases including AIDS.

47. Mr. TEXIER noted from Norway's "core document" (HRI/CORE/1/Add.6) a declaration by the Norwegian Government in 1989 that international instruments to which Norway was a party should be either incorporated into Norwegian domestic law or the latter adapted accordingly. The issue had apparently been widely publicized in Norway and a committee of jurists set up to examine the question and report on it in early 1993. He asked whether that report had yet been submitted and what the present status of international instruments was in Norway.

48. Mr. SPARSIS sought more information on how Norway ensured that the system of apprenticeship training referred to in the Norwegian presentation was not used as a means of exploitation and what rules governed the apprenticeship contract. What were the rights and obligations of employers and employees? Was there a procedure to monitor whether the apprenticeship contract was being properly applied? What was the scope and nature of the participation of the social partners in the formulation and implementation of apprenticeship policies and programmes? Was the apprenticeship scheme financed by the State budget, a pay-roll levy, the contribution of employees or a tripartite arrangement involving the State, employers and employees?

49. It had been stated that around 4,900 young people had been registered as unemployed. He asked what percentage that was of total unemployment and whether it was higher or lower than the percentage of unemployed women, high school graduates and university graduates. What measures were being implemented to provide young people with gainful employment?

50. According to the Norwegian delegation, girls still tended to choose traditional women's occupations. Was that due to the pay, and did Norway have legislation ensuring equal pay for women? Might that choice be a result of the refusal by employers to promote women, thus creating a disincentive for women to enter the labour market? Or did women have little interest in a career?

51. Mention had been made of negotiations between teachers and the Government on setting pay and conditions of employment, but that was only a first step. What happened if negotiations collapsed? Was there an effort by the State to bring the two parties together to reach an agreement? If no agreement could be reached, was there a third step, an arbitration procedure, whereby teachers could state their case before an independent body? How did teachers' pay compare with that of employees in other areas of the public and private sector? Was there an independent research service to establish such statistics, which could then be used in collective bargaining?

52. Mr. MUTERAHEJURU asked for information on the relationship between religion and education in Norway. Were any courses in religion offered by the churches? What was the impact of religious matters upon education and teaching? How many courses on religion were offered in primary and secondary schools? What was the role of the churches in cultural matters?

53. Did persons of foreign origin living in Norway participate fully in the cultural life of the country?

54. He noted that measures had been taken to ensure the religious rights of the Sami population, and he wondered whether the same was true for Norway's foreign population. Did the specific measures taken for the Sami people contribute to their integration in Norwegian society or, on the contrary, did it lead to their exclusion?

55. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether there were specific programmes to help with finding employment for university graduates? What was being done to improve the employment chances of persons older than 45 years of age who had been out of work for long periods? What was the role of continuing education for adults? Was there an on-job training programme to provide adults with new skills?

56. What was the retirement age for teachers? Was there a trend towards deferring the retirement age? Could retired persons take part in continuing education courses? How did the educational system avail itself of the expertise of retired persons?

57. Did special adult education programmes exist for the elderly? Could the elderly benefit fully from cultural activities in Norway? Were the elderly granted price reductions for museum and theatre tickets? Were they encouraged to improve their educational level? In view of the lower income of the elderly, such benefits were of considerable importance. Was there an awareness that elderly persons were entitled to such benefits?

58. Mr. RATTRAY asked to what extent reforms in secondary school education were designed to respond to the changing structure of the Norwegian economy, in particular the trend towards globalization.

59. According to the Norwegian delegation, unemployment had meant that increasing numbers of young people were turning to education, but that the number of apprenticeship places had shown a decline. Was that an indication of a shift to the service industries and away from industries that used apprentices? On what sectors of the economy were the unemployed focusing their attention in their search for job opportunities? He noted that as part of the educational reform, persons between 16 and 19 years of age had the legal right to 3 years of upper secondary education and that the authorities had the corresponding legal obligation to establish follow-up services. Was that a development that was moving in the direction of requiring compulsory education for that age group? Did the reform programme foreshadow that change? Whereas the Norwegian delegation had stated that in the labour market high priority must be given to persons between 16 and 19 years of age, the reform of the educational system had created the legal obligation to provide opportunities for higher education to that age group. Was that not a

contradiction? Did Norwegian strategy ensure that the greater opportunities and better facilities provided to that age group were actually used, and not diverted to other areas in response to the situation on the labour market?

60. Concerning the statistics on vocational training of boys and girls, he wondered whether there was a correlation between the choice made and wages. Were choices dictated not only by gender but also by the rewards?

61. He sought clarification on the decline in the percentage of persons taking advantage of compulsory education, which according to the Norwegian delegation had fallen from 69 per cent in 1970 to 46 per cent in 1990.

62. Mr. NENEMAN welcomed the comprehensive information provided, which contrasted with the rather short original report. He inquired why there had been a gap of nearly 10 years between the initial report and the second periodic report.

63. Turning to a number of specific points in Norway's second periodic report (E/1990/7/Add.7), he sought clarification as to what was meant by the alternative model of fundamental education referred in paragraph 6. Paragraph 10 had spoken of annual budgetary contributions for cultural purposes. How were such contributions distributed, and on what basis were priorities set? Was emphasis placed on classical or on popular culture?

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.